



State of Arizona  
Department of Education

**CN# 37-11**  
**USDA: SP 31-2011**

**MEMORANDUM**

---

**TO:** National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Sponsors

**FROM:** Mary Szafranski, Deputy Associate Superintendent  
Arizona Department of Education, Health & Nutrition Services

Cara Peczkowski, Director  
Arizona Department of Education, School Nutrition Programs

**DATE:** May 27, 2011

**RE:** Updates to the Direct Certification Matching Process Beginning in School Year 2011-2012

---

*Original Signed*

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on several updates regarding the direct certification matching process for School Year (SY) 2011-2012. The interim rule, *Direct Certification and Certification of Homeless, Migrant, and Runaway Children for Free School Meals*, was published on April 25, 2011. One of the provisions in this rule concerns the frequency of direct certification matching activities with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and is effective July 1, 2011. This provision requires that direct certification matching activities with SNAP be done at least three times per school year:

- Within the first forty-five operating days\* of the school year;
- Three months after the initial effort; and
- Six months after the initial effort.

The purpose of the additional matching activities is to facilitate participation of children in the school meals programs and to work towards on-going direct certification with the SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) through computer matching.

\*The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has extended the previous thirty day direct certification matching requirement to forty-five days so Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) can optimize the use of the "State Match" option.

Please keep in mind that previous year's benefits for free and reduced-priced meals are not valid after the thirtieth operating day of the new school year. Thus, if a direct certification match has not been completed before the first thirty operating days and another form of eligibility

documentation has not been obtained (household application, homeless, runaway/migrant), then students' meal benefits must be changed to the "paid" category. As a best practice, ADE recommends LEAs conduct a direct certification match prior to the distribution of household applications or prior to the thirtieth operating day.

In order to efficiently implement the increase in the number of direct certification matching requirements and to manage multiple direct certification match result lists, ADE suggests:

- Eliminating previously matched children from the subsequent searches and/or;
- Using multiple sorting methods (eg. sort by matching result and then alphabetically) to assist in narrowing down the match results.

The Arizona Department of Education has implemented several changes to the direct certification matching process for SY 2011-2012 with the intent to increase the number of school-age children receiving SNAP and TANF benefits being matched in the direct certification computer matching system. These changes include the addition of new computer matching options and the elimination of certain search criteria that may have posed a barrier to finding matches in the previous system. The implemented changes to the direct certification process are as follows:

- The "Data Entry" method name has been changed to "Individual Student Look-Up";
- The addition of an Individual Student Look-Up method to search by a student's social security number;
- The addition of an Upload File method to search by a student's social security number;
- The removal of the mother's first name and social security number fields from both the Individual Student Look-Up and the Upload File - Standard Format methods.

Further clarification of these changes will be detailed in the updated Direct Certification Manual that will be published at the beginning of SY 2011-2012 available on ADE's website at:

<http://www.ade.az.gov/health-safety/cnp/nslp/GuidanceManual/>.

For questions regarding this memo, please contact your School Nutrition Programs Specialist at (602) 542-8700.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*